

Your Guide to Self-Storage Units

We could all use a little space from time to time - sometimes literally. Maybe you have a basement or garage that's full of items that still spark joy, but are taking up way too much room. Or perhaps you're moving into a new place, but it doesn't have quite the storage you need for seasonal items or sports gear. Whatever the reason, renting a self-storage unit is a flexible, affordable, and convenient solution.

Key Points

- **1** Climate controlled units protect your valuables against extreme heat and cold. Humidity is your enemy when it comes to storage – organic materials found in furniture and clothing are breeding grounds for mold and mildew.
- **2** Your monthly rate will depend on a number of factors, such as the unit's size and the amenities offered.
- **3** If you know how long you'll need to rent a unit, you may be able to negotiate a lower monthly rate.
- **4** Many storage facilities require you to have insurance before renting to you and do not assume responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

What is self-storage?

Self-storage businesses (also known as “public storage” or “mini storage”) rent storage space or “units” to customers at a third party location, usually at a monthly rate. The units typically come in one of several standardized sizes, all of which feature a rolling door. Units are secured by a built-in locking mechanism and/or a separate lock. Facilities are managed by a staff dedicated to maximizing your security and convenience.

Why Would I Need Self-Storage?

Moving

Moving to a new home or apartment is a huge undertaking, and even small moves involve hassles and lots of planning. Self-storage offers a convenient, secure solution to an otherwise tedious process.

Renovating or remodeling

Restorations or remodeling projects are valuable investments that enhance your enjoyment of your home. But where to put your stuff in the meantime? A self-storage unit can hold your furniture and other items while you wait for the work to be completed.

Downsizing

Relocating into a smaller home has seen a rise in popularity in recent years for a variety of reasons. But even after getting rid of what you don't need, you'll have some extra items. Keeping a storage unit will let you access those extra items when you need them.

College summers

Most college students look forward to summer, but not to the process of moving out of the dorm and carting everything home. Find a storage unit near campus and store things there for easy access when it's time to go back to class.

Emergencies

Life is full of surprises – unfortunately, not all of them are pleasant. A natural disaster or a death in the family can create the need for a quick storage solution.

Other Services Commonly Confused with Self-Storage

Storage lockers

Need some space, but not too much? Storage lockers offer amenities like climate control, but because of their smaller size, cost a fraction of the price.

Storage sheds

Storage sheds are located on your own property and can be purchased in easy-to-assemble kits from your local home improvement store. While sheds can surely help you create more storage space, they tend to be pricey, and assembly can be a hassle.

How Can I Find Self-Storage Units Near Me?

Thankfully, the days of calling around or driving to find a storage facility are over – today, the best way to find cheap storage is through an online self-storage marketplaces. Simply type in your city or zip code into our site, and we'll find the storage locations nearest to you, complete with details like price, size, amenities, and reviews from other renters. We also offer exclusive discounts, like first month's rent free.

Storage Sizes

After using our handy search tool to find a nearby facility, you'll need to figure out the right size and type of unit. It can be surprisingly hard to visualize the size you need – here's a guide to most standard storage unit sizes.

Storage Sizes

5 x 5 (25 sq ft.)	A 5×5 storage unit can accommodate the contents of a small closet, such as a few boxes and a small desk and a chair. This size is popular among college students.
5 x 10 (50 sq ft.)	This size is popular among those who live in a small apartment. You should be able to fit a couch or bed.
10 x 10 (100 sq ft.)	The most widely rented size, 10×10 units are about the size of a large bedroom and accommodate the contents of an average two-bedroom apartment.
10 x 15 (150 sq ft.)	A 10×15 should fit the contents of a one-bedroom house, or possibly a small car or boat. (Cars and boats often have special requirements, so check with the facility first.)
10 x 20 (200 sq ft.)	Need to store everything in your house? This is probably the size you'll need. You might be able to fit a larger vehicle, such as a truck or an RV . (RVs often require special accommodation, so be sure to inquire at your facility.)
10 x 30 (300 sq ft.)	10x30s are harder to find and are typically only used for special types of storage, such as business storage, but it ultimately depends on your individual or family needs.

Storage unit amenities

Found the right facility, and narrowed down the size? Great – let's move on to amenities. Do you want to be able to run over to your unit anytime of the day or night? Do you live in an area with intense winters? We can help you determine what you need, and what you can skip.

Climate controlled storage

Climate controlled units protect your valuables against extreme heat and cold. Humidity is your enemy when it comes to storage – organic materials found in furniture and clothing are breeding grounds for mold and mildew. Consider opting for climate control, especially if your area gets very hot (like Texas) or very cold (like the East Coast).

24-hour access storage

If you want access to your stuff any time or day, look for a facility that is open 24/7. It'll be a little pricier, but if this matters to you, it may be well worth it.

(Note: There is a difference between unit access (the actual access hours) and facility access (when the facility office is open). Keep this in mind when selecting a facility.)

Drive-up access storage

Drive-up access allows you to pull your vehicle right up to the unit in order to load and unload your items. Drive-up units are very convenient and affordable, but often lack certain amenities such as climate control.

If drive-up access isn't important to you, you can consider a multi-floor facility, where you may have to go indoors and up an elevator to access your unit. It may be harder to move larger items, but it does offer stronger protection from theft and pests, and almost always features climate control.

Storage units with electricity

This means, for an extra fee, your unit will have electrical outlets. (Most do not.) Ask the facility whether the unit you're getting has outlets included.

To view more details about these or other amenities offered by the facility you're interested in, such as 24-hour video surveillance, on-site property managers, or keypad gate entry, you can check the "Features/Amenities" section of their business website.

Storage Unit Prices

Most facilities will charge you on a monthly basis, but you can always ask about other contract options.

What are the main factors that affect the price of a storage unit?

Your monthly rate will depend on a number of factors, such as the unit's size and the amenities offered. The larger the unit, and the more amenities, the higher the monthly rate. Interior units, first floor units, and units near the elevator can also cost more. If you're in a metropolitan area, you can expect to pay more as well.

A surprising factor affecting storage unit cost is the demand in the area. Less demand generally translates to lower prices. If occupancy is high, the price of the remaining units will go up.

What is the average price of a storage unit?

The average monthly rate for a unit is approximately \$90, down 2.5% from 2017. The smallest units (like a 5×5) can go as low as \$65/month, while the larger units (10×20) will run you upwards of \$135 monthly. Prices can also vary by facility, so feel free to shop around using our search tools.

How much does it cost to rent a storage unit for a year?

If you multiply the average monthly rate of \$90, the average annual cost will be just over \$1,000, or \$600-\$700 per year for smaller units. Larger units rent for approximately \$2,000 a year. However, most storage contracts are month-to-month, so what you pay long-term mostly depends on how long you'll need it.

How can I guarantee I find the lowest price on self-storage?

Price-shopping and comparing different options is the best way to find affordable storage. If you know how long you'll need to rent a unit, you may be able to negotiate a lower monthly rate. Not every facility negotiates, but they may be willing to throw in a few perks for free. Ask (nicely!) if they offer free boxes, storage locks, or discounts on moving truck rentals.

Can the storage facility raise my rent?

Yes. Rent increases based on market rates are common. If you're worried about rent increases, go through the lease carefully with your storage facility and make sure you understand the policy and will be promptly notified of any increase.

Will there be any additional fees?

You will typically be charged a one-time "administrative fee" when you move in. This is very common and helps offset the costs of setting up your tenant account and handling

paperwork. Admin fees are usually between \$15-\$25, possibly more, and may stand in for your security deposit. Taxes will vary by location.

You will need to provide your own lock for the unit. Locks range from \$5-\$50. There may also be fees for include dumpster service, electricity, etc.

FAQ

What type of contract will I be required to sign?

Self-storage contracts will include details about what you can keep in your unit, rules governing access and usage, and the facility's payment policy. Always read your contract carefully before signing.

What is self-storage insurance and is it required to rent a unit?

Self-storage insurance covers storage units and their contents. Many storage facilities require you to have insurance before renting to you and do not assume responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged items. If you bring your declaration page when you visit the facility, they may waive the insurance fee (around \$20). Keep in mind that even if your facility requires proof of insurance, taking out a policy will protect your valuables in an adverse event.

Do storage facilities offer insurance?

Some do. If you do not have insurance, you can purchase it through the facility, or find your own carrier. Shop around for the best price.

How much does it cost to insure a storage unit?

Storage unit insurance is fairly inexpensive- as low as \$2 for every \$100 of stored items. Depending on your desired level of coverage, the average price ranges from \$6-\$24.

Are storage units covered under homeowners insurance?

Standard homeowners or renters insurance policies cover items that are in storage, but only at a certain percentage of your coverage limit. Your insurance agent can help you go over the details of your policy.

Do storage units have lights?

Whether indoors or out, storage facilities will provide hallway or outdoor lighting, but not interior lighting. Bring a flashlight or headlamp if you're visiting at night.

What can i keep in storage?

Furniture

Furniture is one of the most commonly stored categories of personal items. Furniture is often quite valuable, sometimes even a family heirloom, so consider climate control to help keep it in great condition for years to come.

Electronics

As with furniture, electronics are vulnerable to the elements. Extreme hot and cold can damage their materials, and humidity can destroy their internal components. Climate control helps prevent the above problems from forming.

Food (sometimes)

If it's not canned or if it's perishable, don't keep it in a storage unit. Attracting pests due to the presence of food is a quick path to eviction.

Guns (sometimes)

Always check with the facility manager first. Depending on their policy, it may be fine to store registered firearms in your unit, but there are probably strict guidelines to follow. If the facility does allow you to keep guns in the unit, always keep them unloaded.

What can't I keep in storage?

Hazardous, flammable or explosive material

If a material is dangerous when spilled or is combustible, DO NOT KEEP IT IN STORAGE. If you need to store any type of chemical, do your research and make sure it's 100% safe to do so.